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ABSTRACT

"Experiences in Acculturation: What Is Being Learned?" is the first of two papers in this volume. It reports on a study of social representations and their development during cultural contacts conducted with beginning teachers who were studied over time and through comparison with cross-culturally competent experts with the aim of putting multiethnic education into the position of preventing and managing crosscultural conflict. Six people with at least 6 years residence in a foreign culture were recruited as experts in acculturation. Twenty monocultural German beginning teachers were chosen as novices in acculturation. Novices took an assimilationist point of view toward cultural differences, but experts appeared to have different cognitive acculturation models for minorities. After a year of teaching multicultural classes, the teachers had different views and less faith in the resolution of cultural conflicts if students were not ready to assimilate to the main culture. The second paper, "Zum Problem der psychologischen Operationalisierung des Begriffs 'Kultur': Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung der psychometrischen Eigenschaften eines Fragebogens zum Thema: 'Individualismus-Kollektiuismus'" ("On the Problem of the Psychological Operationalization of the Concept of 'Culture': Results of an Investigation into the Psychometric Characteristics of a Questionnaire on the Topic:'Individualism-Collectivism'"), explores the idea of a taxonomy of psychologically-based cultural differences being indispensable to intercultural psychological research if it is to be not merely descriptive, but also explanatory. More than 700 individuals were questioned in an attempt to operationalize the cultural dimension 'Individualism-Collectivism,' and the psychometric particularities of this dimension are examined. Because of the incompatible answers from persons with dissimilar cultural backgrounds, the usefulness of the method to understand culture, in the sense of a linear construct, is questionable. These differences are represented with an analysis of intercultural communication. (Contains 15 figures and 29 references.) (SLD)